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Andromeda

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Andromeda

JILLIAN BOGER

The Astronomer says that trying to get a photo of the Milky Way is like being inside a house and
trying to photograph the front door from one of the side windows:

Impossible. Just look over at the neighbor's place, instead.

(Apparently, space is the suburbs and all the galaxies look alike.)

Andromeda moves like the Milky Way does.

Dancing. Outward. Hands reaching in the dark.

One day, arms will grab arms and the two galaxies will crash into each other, painful and bright
and beautiful.

The arms tangle, bodies collapsing,
waiting for the heat death of the universe, together.

However many light years from here,
some residents of a planet in the habitable zone of 6 Persei (maybe Persei V?) wonder,

Why haven't aliens come yet?

Perseans point up at Andromeda's bright white belt,

a thing in a sky that the nearest city's light pollution hasn't touched.

The dirt is dark dust now under an old quilt made by a grandmother's arthritic hands.

Somewhere, there is a Pale Blue Dot,

and one Persean, overwhelmed by the thought of Persean Insignificance in the face of what will
happen to the galaxy in 7.5 million years

Smiles and Cries.

The next-door neighbor undresses,
and is beautiful.